

By Mark Jenkins April 29 at 11:26 AM

Michael Borek

There are 16 pictures of the president's home in "Treachery of Images: The White House," Michael Borek's show at Multiple Exposures Gallery. Yet it could be said that there's only one. Each picture of the landmark is identical; what differs is the backdrop on which it has been — what? Projected? Reflected? Superimposed?

The Czech-born Bethesda photographer would prefer that viewers solve the puzzle for themselves, although he does specify that the overlapping is not the result of computer or darkroom trickery. The White Houses seen on the sides of 16 white vehicles — buses? vans? — were all captured in a single shot. They're distinguished only by minor industrial or environmental differences, such as drops of rain. (Amusingly, these look as though they might be the result of spray from the North Lawn fountain in the picture.)

Borek took the show's title from a Surrealist painting by René Magritte, in which a picture of a pipe is inscribed, "This is not a pipe." Today, the industrialized world is awash in imagery, and people are supposedly more media-savvy than they were in Magritte's time. Yet it's easy to confuse representation with reality. That's why this one picture is worth 16 looks.

Michael Borek: Treachery of Images: The White House On view through May 8 at Multiple Exposures Gallery, Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. 703-683-2205. multipleexposuresgallery.com.